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## Kentucky farmers donate cattle to hard-hit Louisiana



**Byron  
Crawford**

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were so overwhelmed by the losses that they had no resources to begin rebuilding their livestock herds.

In a nation of tragedies defined by headlines, voice-over videos and 10-second sound bites, hurricanes Katrina and Rita are now old news.

Another truckload of bulls, or hay, or horses, or fencing supplies leaving Kentucky for southwest Louisiana and southern Mississippi often goes unnoticed.

But the struggle by many farmers to stay on their farms and rebuild continues in regions hit hardest by the flooding and other devastation. A large number who lost their homes, equipment, barns, fences and crops

"We lost an estimated 35,000 head of cattle," said Bob Felknor of the Louisiana Cattlemen's Association. "Everything in the media centered around New Orleans ... but there were people outside that area that came back and there was nothing left. Everything was just gone."

Back in Kentucky, David Neville of the Henry and Shelby County cattlemen's associations read about efforts by the Fellowship of Christian Farmers to find hay for farmers in devastated areas of Louisiana. He wanted to help, but had no hay. So he called the fellowship's rapid response coordinator, John Adams of Oldham County, and said he would donate some bulls.

As word of the donation spread, others from the Kentucky Cattlemen's Association and farmers and ranchers from across the country donated bulls from their herds to Louisiana farmers and ranchers whose herds had been virtually wiped out by the hurricanes. An Eastern Kentucky trucker volunteered to haul the cattle and a

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livestock market owner near Smithfield offered his stockyards as a holding facility. At last count, more than 50 bulls had been shipped to Louisiana.

### Making donations count

"We wanted to do something that would directly help the farmers," said Neville, an auctioneer and cattleman who has since announced his Democratic candidacy for Kentucky commissioner of agriculture. "Rather than writing a \$100 check, we think those bulls will have a greater economic impact."

Cattleman John Venable of Winchester donated seven bulls for Louisiana farmers. A Texas rancher whose cow herd had nearly been destroyed by the recent wildfires donated six bulls. A drawing for the bulls was held in Louisiana after the farmers and ranchers in greatest need had been identified.

One of the donated bulls went to Earl Armstrong of Plaquemines Parish, La., who had about 100 cattle survive out of a herd that had numbered nearly 2,100.

"I'm trying to get things back together, saving all my heifers from the cattle that I have left," Armstrong said. "People were helped quite a bit by the bulls that were sent in. It was just at the right time."

Adams said 140 tractor-trailer loads of hay have been shipped to hurricane-devastated farms in the past 15 months, and work on fences and numerous other recovery projects is continuing.

Now, the Fellowship of Christian Farmers is looking for horses to donate to 4-H youngsters in Kilm, Miss., to replace animals that have been lost. Adams is buying and taking donations of young horses from Kentucky and Southern Indiana for delivery to the youngsters as early as next week.

"Yesterday I found out that a group of Louisiana people that we've helped ... are heading for Greensburg, Kansas, to set up work teams and help farmers in the outlying regions clean up their farms and get their machinery back in place, and whatever they can do to help after this tornado," Adams said. "They just called and said, 'You've helped us. Now we want to help you.' "

For more information, or to volunteer assistance, call John Adams at (502) 241-4122.

Byron Crawford's column appears on Sundays, Wednesdays and Fridays. Reach him at (502) 582-4791 or [bcrawford@courier-journal.com](mailto:bcrawford@courier-journal.com). Comment on this column, and read previous columns, at [www.courier-journal.com/byron](http://www.courier-journal.com/byron).

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These days it's so easy to lose your faith in humanity, thanks for a restorative article Byron!

Posted: Wed May 09, 2007 8:53 am

God Bless all the people who have stepped up to offer solid, lasting assistance for those who need it most. The farming/agriculture/breeding industry is fickle at best. How heart warming to hear about those within the industry who are willing to reach out and help others in their field.

Thanks Byron for writing about this. As you said, many people no longer give thought to the ongoing rebuilding efforts. This was a great way to remind people that there are those still in need, but also that there are lots of good hearted people still willing to lend a hand.

Posted: Wed May 09, 2007 8:26 am

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